

Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Nanchang JP

Minutes from the meeting on Friday, 21st April 2023

Time: 5:20 pm GMT+7

Location: NCU JP Smart Room A

Staff Members Present:

Professor Mark Maconochie Chair (QM)

Professor Zhijun Luo (NCU)

Ms. Yi Yang Vice Dean (NCU)

Ms. Nancy Wang Administrator (QM)

Student Members Present:

Name	Class	NCU ID	QM ID
Wu Wendi	221	4217122018	221147816
Pu Xinyue	223	4209121029	221148880
Su Lechen	223	4217122123	221148879
Zhang Jiatong	224	4217122133	221149005
Wang Zhaowen	211	4217121008	210969067
Song Qimin	212	4217121074	210968967
Qian Xianzhe	214	4217121129	210968853
Zhang Kexin	215	4217121199	210969894
Wang Yilu	202	4217120037	200964272
Liang Hanlin	203	4217120185	200964892
Yao Nan	204	4217120095	200965187

Part 1: Preliminary Items

1. Welcome

Prof Maconochie and Prof Luo welcomed committee members to the Nanchang JP SSLC meeting on 21st April 2023. Prof Maconochie introduced himself to all the student representatives and then students introduced themselves to the committee.

2. Brief updates on the matters arising from the previous meeting on 16th

November 2022

Prof Maconochie briefly updated students on some key questions raised in the previous meeting

- a) Regarding the query of the unified evaluation standards between classes 1-3 and 4-6 of SNU213, SNU209 and SNU205 coursework as anonymized modules, Prof Maconochie presented detailed data on coursework marks from the three modules. Using histograms and violin plots it was shown there was no obvious bias between performance of classes and thus likely no evaluation biases with different lecturers on the modules the students raised in the last SSLC. In addition, a full academic cycle of all coursework from JP QM modules (again anonymized, Semester B 2021-22 and Semester A 2022-23) were presented through histograms and this also showed that there is no obvious bias between classes, but only minor differences in performance in occasional pieces of coursework as would be expected. Prof Maconochie expressed the hope that students would feel more relaxed having seen that the aggregated data showed only minor differences of normal levels of variation between classes.
- b) Regarding the request on reminding students on upcoming office hours by releasing office hour meeting IDs before office hour starts via QQ and not my QMPlus alone, Prof Maconochie confirmed that this message had been delivered to staff. He asked students if this had improved, and received confirmation from student representatives.
- c) Regarding the comment that students would like to type in the chat box in online meetings to communicate with lecturers during office hours, Prof Maconochie has passed on the message to lecturers to understand and accept that some students could be shy or not in a quiet place to speak with them, although he did encourage students to speak to lecturers verbally as well if possible.

The committee approved the minutes from the previous meeting, held on 16th November 2022, as an accurate record of proceedings, no questions were raised.

Part 2: Programme Delivery and other Matters Raised

Student representatives reported the following issues related to learning

and teaching matters:

Year 3 Ms. Wang Yilu

Q1. Ms. Wang Yilu raised a request on the **numbered seats in the Lecture Hall** now we are back to face to face teaching. Since there are only half of the Year 3 students who attend the class in the lecture hall, students wanted to choose the seats freely.

Prof Maconochie refused this initial request, as numbered seating allows lecturers to quickly identify and missing students. Also students will soon discover that lectures will wander around students in the classroom during class, to engage students into their teaching. Following further discussion it was noted that some students want to sit further forward in the first two rows or adjust their seats. It was agreed that whilst numbered seats will remain, consultation between student counselors and QM staff will identify a compromise where we bring students closer to the stage in numbered seats. JP administrator Nancy will check it with Y3 student counselor.

Year 3 Ms. Yao Nan

Q2. Ms. Yao Nan raised a concern on **morning classes**. For the class that hold on 8 am in the morning, they're wondering if it's possible to change the starting time to 8:30 am, and the break time changes from 30 mins to 10mins.

Prof Maconochie disagreed with the student's concern, as NCU lectures start from 7:50am which would send a poor message to the many other students at Nanchang. Further, this will cause a knock-on effect and encroach on time available for office hours and in the middle of the day if QMUL lectures start from 8:30am.

For reducing the break time between daily lectures to 10 minutes, Prof Maconochie reminded students they're now going to take face-to-face classes, so they can take the time to communicate with their lecturers and lecturers in the break. In addition lecturers need a little time between lectures to save recordings for students' revision, and time for recovering their voice.

Q3. Ms. Yao Nan raised another question about **Office Hour**. Students

want to know if lecturers could give them a problem-based learning question, so it can help them understand the lesson deeply.

Prof Maconochie stated that he had suggested this and would remind lecturers again to give students a question to think about and bring to office hour. Now, lecturers are all thinking about the transition from online office hour to face-to-face office hours, and both could be tried, as our experiences during the pandemic suggests more students are involved in online office hours. Prof Maconochie also does encourage students to use the questions from past exam papers already available, have a go at answering them and bring them to office hour to add to a good interactive with their lecturers.

Dean Luo suggested that some spare labs/rooms could be used for face to face office hours to facilitate interactive learning, as it could be busy if 6 lecturers meet students all together in the same place at the same time! Dean Luo will investigate the labs arrangement and availability of suitable rooms following discussion with Jiahe and lab director.

Year 3 Ms. Liang Hanlin

Q4. Ms. Liang Hanlin raised a question on **SNU301**. Students want to know if the presentation of SNU301 will be presented to all QM supervisors/students **** and graded by them.

Prof Maconochie first confirmed that SNU301 presentations will start after final exams. Then he stated that the supervisor will be most likely be one of the examiners, but that students will have two examiners. He also expressed his recognition of students' hard work and reminded students that the consideration of two markers in every presentation would make sure these marks are as fair as possible. The presentations will take place either online or in person but which one of the two options has not yet been confirmed. Finally, Prof Maconochie suggested students should begin to put their presentations together as soon as they finished their reports next week.

Q5. Ms. Liang Hanlin raised a question on the standard for the **evaluation** of SNU301 and SNU309. She is a bit concerned if the evaluation standards are different between the two modules.

Prof Maconochie confirmed that SNU301 and SNU309 supervisors use clear marking guidelines. Further there is regular shuffling of lecturers between the two modules to share best practice and be aware of the variety of projects. There are two examiners for the presentation that ensures a fair evaluation. Prof Maconochie also explained that NCU supervisors have provided an independent mark for students' lab effort and diligence, but they will not attend the presentation grading. Prof Maconochie will also arrange some time this Sunday afternoon for Y3 students to ask questions about SNU301 project during their first face to face meeting.

Y2 Ms. Wang Zhaowen

Q6. Ms Wang Zhaowen raised a question whether they need to hand in their **mobile phones** for offline classes.

Prof Maconochie confirmed that students don't need to hand in their mobile phones to their lecturers, but their phones need to be put into the phone homes (phone boxes) on the wall in the classrooms before the lecture starts. During the break, students can get their phones back but need to put them back when the lecture starts again. Students are also required to put their iPad and laptop in their bags or on the shelf underneath the desk. Students are encouraged to keep up with lecturer's teaching listening and taking notes and will have the recording for revision within a few hours, with the PDF for the delivered lecture appearing earlier. Students learned in academic skills that they should look for keywords to help them keep up with the theme of the lecture and then go through the lectures after, which is a way of training you for real life.

Q7. Ms. Wang Zhaowen raised another question on the **practical of Immunology**. Student said basic immunology is very complicated and they had lab Practical very early in week 3 before the material was covered in lectures, so they want to move the lab classes a bit backwards.

Prof Maconochie understood the theoretical background is important for the lab practical, so he will talk to Immunology lecturers to see if this was the design of the module content/practical, or if is a timetabling issue or an issue with NCU lab demonstrators. If it is due to a knowledge gap this will be considered. This has happened in other modules in the past but in a planned way e.g. Prof Maconochie also mentioned that for the year 1

module Human Anatomy, students have some smaller practical elements before they finish a particular body system/region as a form of problem-based and self-directed learning in class. He will check with the lecturers and others and then feedback to students.

Year 2 Mr. Song Qimin

Q8. Mr. Song Qimin raised a question on if they could use **iPad/laptop** to take notes in classes, as they usually use the device to download PDF material in advance. If they print the PDF out every time in advance, it costs a lot and not convenient.

Prof Maconochie confirmed again that iPads and laptops cannot be used during lectures. He said since laptops and iPads can connect to the internet, this will lead to some students not concentrating in class. He suggested students use a piece of paper or last years PDFs and a pen to take notes, then students can go back to review and listen to the lecture after, and marry what you listened to and your notes on the previous PDF. This encourages one good studying technique for deep learning, not just memorizing the material.

Year 2 Mr. Xianzhe Qian

Q9. Mr. Qian Xianzhe raised a request on **courseware**. They're wondering if lecturers could upload PPT before lectures. Students fully understand that their lecturers constantly confirm and improve lectures, but since they don't have any textbook yet, many students need to preview the lecture in advance.

Prof Maconochie declined the request and mentioned that this question was just raised in last SSLC meeting. He pointed out that lecturers want students to have the latest research and sometimes the order and structure of the ppt contents will change so as to ensure the lecturer is able to present what they consider the best lecture to students. There is usually some new developments every year in subject matter, which means the final lecture is usually finished in the last minute and changes could happen in the last 30 minutes. However the changes made each year tend to be minor, so students can use last year's PDFs on QM+ to prepare beforehand. Prof Maconochie also reminded students of the availability of the JP library

Y2 Ms. Zhang Kexin

Q10. Ms. Zhang Kexin represented students who requested if they could get **video recordings** during the new offline classes. In previous lessons, lecturers recorded the screen and then uploaded the videos on QM+, so students could watch it repeatedly. But now they will have offline, in person teaching, so they want to know whether they still can get the video recordings.

Prof Maconochie shared that he has made sure that the recording equipment is all working in all the JP classrooms. He was happy to tell students that yes, they will receive recordings for every lecture as before, but each recording will be produced by lecturers. He pointed out that the recording will be just like the recordings that students have had but even better! He told students that lecturers are encouraged to process their recordings within 2 to 3 hours to make sure students can download them the same day to listen to as they review their days lectures. Also, this also is another reason why they want the early lectures that start at 8am and not later as requested. Prof Maconochie shared that it normally takes 45-60 mins process the recording file for each lecture and then it will be uploaded immediately on QM+. He was very pleased that what lecturers have been doing for students is also seen as really important by the students. Our JP pioneered these live recordings in China from the very start and this has been taken up by other QMUL programmes since the pandemic.

Prof Maconochie also encouraged students to bring questions that arise from lecture recordings to Office Hour,

Year 1 Ms. Jiatong Zhang

Q11. Ms. Jiatong Zhang reported an issue with the **microphones for communication in class**. Lecturers often ask students to answer questions with microphones in class. However, only teachers can hear what the students are saying, but others in class cannot. It seems that the microphone is not connected to the amplifier in classroom.

Prof Maconochie told students the current microphone would not be used now (was only used for online lessons) and shared two ways in which lecturers will now be able to help students speak in class. Lecturers use a lapel microphone in class and when there's a question from class, lecturers will come around and be able to pass the student the microphone to speak, and the voice will come through the loud speaker so everyone can hear. Another even better way we are looking to reinstate is where the lecturer

also has a hand-held microphone and the students can use this and can pass around for students to speak and be heard. There is definitely a solution right now with at least one handheld microphone, and Prof Maconochie would like to test it with students during the upcoming first meeting with them in the lecture hall.

Q12. Ms. Zhang Jiatong represented some students who raised another issue about **download speed** of recordings from QM+. Some students said it's difficult to download recordings on campus.

Prof Maconochie suggested student to be near the fastest broadband available to download the files, not by using their phone data, because the recording files are quite big.

Ms. Liang Hanlin from Year 3 provided a useful advice. She said NCU internet (both lab buildings and dorms) is very fast for downloading files in the morning, which usually takes 3 to 5 minutes to get one file, but it's a bit slower to download in the evening, taking around 10 to 12 minutes.

Year 1 Mr. Wu Wendi

Q13. Mr. Wu Wendi raised a question on **marking criteria of final exams**. Moreover, if it is possible to provide them with the **standard answers** of previous exam paper together with the scoring rubric.

Prof Maconochie explained that the marking guidelines for the final exams for Year 1 and Year 2 are pretty clear, as marks breakdowns are clearly indicated on the exam papers themselves. Normally students are given a strong indication of how the marks are distributed. For example, if there're 3 marks for one section, it often means 3 points or 6 points that students need to make. For Year 3 and Year 2 essays, there are specific marking guidelines to show how different course work or are marked.

Prof Maconochie refused the follow-up request for model answers of exam papers. He reiterated that we do not give students model answers, because if one paper with answers has been provided, then another paper will be requested, and then model answers. He suggested students have a go and bring to office hours.

Q13. Mr. Wu Wendi raised a request on **previous years lectures**. Some

students want to preview the modules to be learned in the upcoming semester during their free time in vacation. They're wondering when they could view the modules on QM+ after the freshman year finished.

Prof Maconochie first explained to students that lecturers need to wait for the whole of QMUL to roll over QMPlus to start the new year. Once this is done, then normally students can see and download previous years lectures by mid-August. Prof Maconochie will remind lecturers to put this year's PDF for students to preview as soon as the pages are rolled over but students should be aware to ignore the rest of the content as lecturers will be working on the page content that will be ready by the start of the semester.

Year 1 Ms. Su Lechen

Q14. Ms. Su Lechen suggested the following to improve **remote teaching**. Since some students cannot understand what the professors are saying immediately, they're wondering if it's possible to add more **notes on the slides** during the class. Meanwhile, when lecturers answer students' questions in office hours, whether they could type the **keywords** of the answers in the discussion board.

Prof Maconochie did not agree to the two requests. Students are suggested to take their own notes and then ask their questions during the following office hours. Indeed if some students couldn't understand some particular points in the lecture, they also could take recording to the lecturer and/or PDFs to ask for explanation. Lecturers cannot spend a lot of time for writing during teaching as otherwise the syllabus will not be covered. Office hours will be largely face to face so will be very different and it would be inefficient for the lecturer to type sitting next to students. Online office hours are different

Q15. Ms. Su Lechen gave a suggestion on **course work**. The SAQs of the course work from previous years should account for a small proportion of their new coursework assignment. Some students may copy the work from previous students, which is not fair and cause plagiarism.

Prof Maconochie expressed that there have been little changes that students don't see in coursework, and students' answers then do show if it is

plagiarized from previous years. The Queen Mary JP lecturers do plan to change practicals but this has been slowed by the pandemic and our inability to travel to China and organize new practicals. Nevertheless practicals and associated coursework has been changed, so for example one Year 1 practical in human cell and one in Basic Medical Genetics were entirely new. . For Year 3 309 projects, QM lecturers and module leader need to talk closely with the NCU demonstrators to develop new practicals when they're in Nanchang.

Prof Maconochie reminded students that don't copy at any time. When students submit the course work, it comes up with a similarity score including to previous years and high scores get looked at closely by lecturers.

Q16. Ms. Su Lechen raised a question about SNU103 *Human Anatomy*. Students have Human Anatomy courses from Monday to Wednesday, and they take the human anatomy practical on Thursdays, but the practical test asked some questions that students will learn on Friday. So, they didn't learn this knowledge, and they don't know how to answer the question.

Prof Maconochie noted that ideally lecturers do cover your learning on the beforehand. But, the lecturers may want to encourage students to do self-directed learning in the practical. Also, he suggested one solution students could take and use last year's learning material in their practical. Prof Maconochie will talk to the lecturer of SNU103 to find out if this is a deliberate design or a timetabling problem reflecting availability of rooms and will give feedback to students.

Year 1 Ms. Pu Xinyue

Q17. Ms. Pu Xinyue raised a request on the NCU module *Histology and Embryology* in semester A. They didn't learn about embryology last semester, which is relevant to the *Human Anatomy* they are learning now. They asked if it's possible to add some courses on embryology.

Prof Maconochie shared with students that they will learn a lot of embryology in year 2, in the module *Cell Biology and Developmental Genetics*. Embryology is difficult for many students, so lecturers can't quickly teach you embryology. It's a chicken and egg problem as to which comes first because you can't learn embryology without knowing anatomy.

There's no perfect solution, and if embryology was taught in year 1 we would have to make embryology so simple that you won't understand any genetics of development which students begin to touch on in Year 2. And in Year 3, students will learn more detailed developmental defects and their genetic basis. If more embryology is put into Year 1, where does the year 1 content go that it replaces from anatomy? Therefore, Prof Maconochie suggested students should go back to review the areas of anatomy related to development when they study the related parts in the following Year 2 and 3 study.

Prof Maconochie mentioned that a curriculum review will be undertaken next academic year, where external reviewers from other universities, both the UK and China, will visit and study the curriculum and make recommendations to us if there are any gaps in the knowledge or sequence of content that we need to adjust.

Q18. Ms. Pu Xinyue raised the last question of the session on the NCU module *Human Anatomy* in Semester A. Students said they have no knowledge about human anatomical structures and they have to do the experiment without teacher in the classroom.

Dean Luo and Dean Yang will investigate what happened for NCU module *Human Anatomy* and then give feedback to students.